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or personal mishaps. They do not attempt to control nature by means of ritual, though the content of their prayers might persuade the superficial observer that this is their object. Their ritual is concerned with the effects of natural phenomena and physiological happenings on the fate of the individual and the coherence of the community. Ritual is the means of fortifying the individual and the society against these effects. Tallensi believe that the fate of individuals and of communities depends on their relationships with mystical powers. Natural phenomena are the medium, as it were, by means of which these powers intervene in human affairs. If men offend them, they will intervene disastrously; if men please them, they will intervene beneficently. And men offend or please the mystical powers by the manner in which they behave to one another and by the way in which they observe the moral norms of the society and the ritual duties that symbolize these norms. Ritual—that is, sacrifice and prayer—is a means of keeping up a good relationship with the mystical powers. These, as we know, are principally the ancestors and the Earth.

Striving after Security: the Ritual Background

We have tried to state briefly how the Tallensi connect their ritual conceptions with their striving after personal prosperity and social security. This can be put in another way. The individual farmer, working his own land with the aid of his dependants for their common subsistence, looks to his and their immediate ancestors for spiritual protection. He and his dependants are personally responsible for the success of their efforts in the working of their fields. They are also personally responsible for the goodwill of their immediate ancestors. The sacrifices and prayers they offer to their ancestors at sowing and harvest express these private concerns. They enable them to enjoy the fruits of their labour with a clear conscience and to overcome the demoralizing effect of accidents, which they regard as private misfortunes.

On the other hand, public calamities are associated with the mystical powers of the Earth, which are a symbolical projection of the common concerns of mankind. By prayers and sacrifices the ritual officers who represent the community in relation to the Earth and the Earth in relation to the community, the tendaanas, preserve the benevolence of the Earth towards mankind. Even though ritual measures often and obviously fail to prevent a public calamity, they serve to reintegrate the community after the calamity has passed. The idea of the Earth's being concerned with the common good corresponds to the fact that the cultivations of individuals are but parcels of land cut from the limitless earth.

Just as the earth's surface is limitless, so the mystical power of the Earth is universal.[1] All men everywhere acknowledge this in the ritual observances by which they show their respect for the Earth. The most important of these observances are the rules concerning 'things found on

[1] The word *tɛŋ* belongs to the *ka—si* Noun Class and takes the third person singular pronoun *ka*. This is the pronoun always used to refer to the earth in its material aspect. But in its mystical aspect the Earth is commonly referred to by the third person singular pronoun *u* which is primarily used for persons. To conform with this rule, we write 'earth' in the first sense with a lower-case initial letter, and 'Earth' with a capital letter for the latter.

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779 the earth (*tɛŋɔnpiima*)'. As we have previously noted, any article or stray
425 animal, the owner of which is unknown, is a *tɛŋɔnpiimɔr*. It must be
688 handed to a tendaana. The rule applies to stray fowls, goats, sheep, and especially to objects of iron; and it is most scrupulously observed. A hoe or an axe, for instance, can safely be left lying about on a farm. Tallensi speak with awe of the sacrilege of appropriating a 'thing found on the Earth'. They say that swift retribution invariably overtakes a sinner, and they quote the example of those who occasionally break the taboo, by accident or purposely. It is particularly heinous to take anything found near an Earth shrine, where the mystical power of the Earth is directly localized. Even children are fearful of picking up bits of rubbish near *tɛŋgbana*. Breaches of Earth taboos serve, in the long run, to increase the respect in which they are held. The native is constantly reminded, by these taboos, that the useful, material earth is only the façade of the universal mystical Earth. They remind him that the security and satisfaction he derives from the utilization of the earth's resources are conditional upon his moral behaviour.

714 We have examined the relation of the concept of the Earth in its mystical aspect to the great public calamities that threaten the physical basis of the existence of the natives. But this concept has a positive side, too. When men do not offend it, the Earth permits crops to flourish, women to bear children, and men's enterprises to succeed. Locusts, Tallensi say, when they rationalize the powers they attribute to the Earth, come up out of the earth; tornadoes sweep across its surface; but, also, crops grow on the earth; homesteads stand on it; men walk on it; out of it they dig the roots they use to cure their illnesses and make magical defences for themselves; in it they bury their dead. All these services of the material earth have their reflex in the ritual values attached to the mystical Earth.

779 All Tallensi stand in awe of the Earth. We have learnt that they speak
774 of it as 'a living thing', meaning by this that it intervenes mystically in
793 human affairs in the same way as the ancestor spirits do. When they talk of the Earth they mention its remorseless punishment of sacrilege, and the things it prohibits, not its blessings. Yet it is the symbol to them of the forces that promote the common welfare of all mankind without discrimination. Thus a wandering stranger is a 'thing found on the earth'; but
567 he is given to a chief and not to a tendaana. Chiefs are ritually qualified
621 to sell a human being into slavery; a tendaana would commit a sacrilege against the Earth if he did so. As the priest of the Earth it is his duty to protect human beings, keep the peace among them, and be watchful against the dangers that threaten them. The dog lives in such close association with man that it has quasi-human qualities, and therefore stray dogs must also be surrendered to chiefs. And this holds for stray cattle, too, which are also closely identified with man owing to their great economic value and their special importance as sacrificial animals.

682 Everywhere, too, the Earth forbids the shedding of blood in strife, and, in the neighbourhood of important Earth shrines, the raising of the alarm signal (a long-drawn-out, high-pitched cry *ya-a-a-a-hi*) as a call to arms, and therefore to bloodshed. Men who transgress have to pay heavy

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Elsewhere their differentiation and relationship are obscured by the fusion of the two roles in a single office or by the subdivision and distribution of the two roles among a group of offices.

Broadly speaking, however, chiefship symbolizes the plexus of social relationships, based on lineage and kinship, which unites a defined group of people into a community; and tendaanaship symbolizes the bonds of men, as members of a community, with land, locality, and the material earth. Chiefship and tendaanaship are ritual offices because the principles of social structure they stand for are so fundamental that they appear to the natives as axiomatic. Projected on to the ritual plane, they are transformed into unchallengeable values and so become beacons that guide men's behaviour. Both chiefship and tendaanaship are vested in maximal lineages and therefore have the ritual sanction of the ancestor cult; both are associated with the organization of the Tallensi into local communities and the utilization of natural resources, and therefore have the sanction of the Earth cult. But in their complementary conjunction the emphasis in the chiefship is on its transmission from the ancestors, while the emphasis in the tendaanaship is on its specific ritual bonds with the mystical Earth.

This is brought out by one curious point of difference between the burial customs of Namoos and those of most non-Namoo clans. Namoos bury their dead at the entrance to the homestead, so that the ancestral graves of every segment of a lineage are separate. Men know the graves of their particular forebears and the graves of remoter ancestors who are significant for the structure of the lineage. The tombs of chiefs, in particular, are known and cared for by their agnatic descendants. Namoos also sacrifice to a particular ancestor on his grave. Clans which have tendaanas usually bury their dead in cemeteries within the settlement. They do not sacrifice to their ancestors on their graves and within two generations forget which is the grave of a particular individual. In other respects their ancestor cult is exactly the same as that of the Namoos. In clans that have the chiefship (*naditib*), the natives explain, the most important thing is for every man to be able to show exactly how he is connected by descent with previous holders of the chiefship; whereas in *tendaanditib* clans this is unimportant as all the members of the clan have the same ritual bonds with the Earth.

The Tendaana's Tey

Everywhere in Taleland men utilize the earth's resources in the same way and owe respect to the mystical powers of the Earth. But the natural resources of the Earth are of direct importance for them at particular places—where they farm, build their homesteads, hunt, fish, or collect bush products. It is at these places that the mystical power of the Earth impinges directly on their lives. Men's utilitarian interests in the earth's surface are sectional, not global; and so also are their social interests in it since they are divided into maximal lineages and clans which are precisely localized. Thus the earth's surface is divided into sections relatively to the social organization of the Tallensi. Each section has its own Earth shrines for the worship of the Earth at that place, and they are in the

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ritual custody of a particular clan or maximal lineage. Such a territorial section is the *tɛŋ* of a particular tɛndaana. He is the master (*daana*) of that locality (*tɛŋ*), exercising ritual jurisdiction over it on behalf of the maximal lineage or clan which has the ritual ownership of it, in virtue of being the head of that unit. He is the mediator between the Earth and the people whose interests lie in that fraction of its physical surface. When the concept *tɛŋ* is coupled with a tɛndaana it has a double meaning. It denotes both a stretch of territory and a place of contact with the mystical Earth. It may be used to designate a single Earth shrine (*tɔŋgban*) and its precincts, a total area of anything from about 20 square yards to an acre or two; and it can be applied to the whole of a tɛndaana's *tɛŋ*, which includes a number of *tɔŋgbana*.

Tɛndaanas' *tɛs* vary greatly in extent. As I have no exact measurements, I can only indicate roughly the range of differences. Small *tɛs* are the rule in the older and more densely settled part of the country. The area of a clan settlement on Tɛnzugu, for instance, perhaps a square mile altogether, may be divided amongst three or four tɛndaanas. On the other hand, at the peripheries tɛndaanas have ritual jurisdiction over large tracts of land, many square miles in extent. This is largely due to the absence of permanent settlement in these parts until recently, and the still relatively scanty population living there.

Tallensi do not think of a tɛndaana's *tɛŋ* in terms of its size but in terms of its position relatively to the *tɛs* of neighbouring tɛndaanas. Tɛndaanas themselves claim that their *tɛs* have definite boundaries, but when asked to show them they become very uneasy and quote the maxim 'The boundaries of a *tɛŋ* must not be pointed out (*Tɛŋɔn tɛntɔris pu pa'ana*)'. When my bona fides was, at length, accepted by the Tallensi I was able to persuade several tɛndaanas to have the boundaries of their *tɛs* shown to me. My guides were always ill at ease, and apparently felt that what they were doing verged on sacrilege. Chiefs and elders of clans that do not have tɛndaanas usually declare that it is impossible for tɛndaanas to have boundaries (cf. p. 164); for are not neighbouring tɛndaanas always 'kin' (*mabiis*)—by clanship or by ritual ties? Do they not often sacrifice together at one another's Earth shrines (*tɔŋgbana*) or go by stealth, at night, to sacrifice at a neighbouring tɛndaana's Earth shrines? Tɛndaanas do not deny this. In every group of contiguous maximal lineages, each presided over by a tɛndaana (as for instance Gbeog, Gbizug, and Zubiuŋ), the senior tɛndaana (in this instance the Gbizug tɛndaana) always claims to be the real 'owner' of the aggregate of *tɛs* held by the group of tɛndaanas. He talks of this aggregate of *tɛs* as if it were one *tɛŋ* apportioned amongst his junior 'brothers' and himself for the greater convenience of performing the priestly duties of the tɛndaanaship. They divide their common spiritual jurisdiction rather than a distinct stretch of territory; and in principle this rule embraces the whole of Taleland. For the powers of the Earth are indivisible, the Earth is a unity. When the Gbizug tɛndaana sacrifices to his supreme *tɔŋgban*—or, as he often phrases it, his *tɛŋ*—Kpoŋkparɔg, he invokes all the important *tɔŋgbana* of Taleland, up to the limit of the field of politico-ritual relations in which Gbizug participates, from Duusi in the north-east to Biuŋ in the south.

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Like the tendaanas all the *tɔŋgbana* of Taleland, and even beyond Taleland, are described as 'kin' (*mabiis*) to one another. In principle, *teŋ*, the Earth, cannot be divided up; it is the tendaanaship which is distributed.

This explains the diversity and lack of precision one finds in the boundaries of tendaanas' *tes*. Like settlement boundaries they are determined by social rather than physical facts, though here and there conspicuous topographical features may be fixed upon as landmarks from which to take a bearing. Doo *teŋ*, the area immediately surrounding and including the supreme *tɔŋgban* Doo of Tenzugu, is an example of a tendaana's *teŋ* that can easily be distinguished. Homesteads on Doo *teŋ* may not have roofs of thatch (*mopin*) but must have flat roofs (*bɛa*, vb.) of mud. This is a quasi-totemic taboo of this *teŋ* (cf. p. 142). Standing on the wall of granite boulders that overlooks this part of Tenzugu one can see where the mud roofs end and the thatched roofs begin. I was very reluctantly told about, and later shown, what purported to be the fixed physical boundaries of Doo *teŋ* by men of Kpata'ar, the clan which has ritual jurisdiction over it. A ditch, a line of large boulders, a prominent tree, a path, such were the landmarks by which they went. But the striking thing about this boundary was that, almost all the way, it followed the social boundaries between Kpata'ar and Gundaat on the one side, and between Bunkiuk and Samiit on the other. In the closely settled parts of the country, wherever *tendaanditib* clans are in occupation of the areas under their ritual jurisdiction, there is a noticeable tendency for the alleged physical boundaries of *tes* to coincide with social boundaries between clans or maximal lineages.

Settlements like Tongo, where people believed to be of immigrant descent occupy land under the ritual jurisdiction of other clans, are instructive. Tongo, like many other Tale settlements, stretches over the ritual territories of several tendaanas (cf. p. 169). The alleged boundaries between the *tes* of the Gbizug, Soog, and Zubiuŋ tendaanas run through Tongo. As the people of Tongo put it, these clans at various times allotted portions of their own land for Tongo people to build and farm on. Physical landmarks are pointed out as indicating these boundaries. But if they are examined it will be seen that they tend to coincide with the social boundaries between sections (*yizugat*) or between segments of sections (*dugat*). (See map at end of book.) Wherever part of a tendaana's boundary runs between homesteads of men of the same segment (*dug*), the homesteads (rarely more than one or two) on the wrong side of the boundary have not been sited there for more than a generation. The continual slow shifting about of homestead sites in a settlement through the course of generations is paralleled by a shifting of the boundaries between farm plots; for they pass through alternate phases of being divided up, wholly or in part, among the segments of a nuclear lineage that has reached a phase of fission, and of being reconstituted, wholly or in part, at a later stage of lineage integration. These internal adjustments often result in a spilling over of one section of a clan into what was till then regarded as the area of a neighbouring unit of like sort.

We lack historical documents; but we can infer from the contemporary dynamics of Tale social life that the boundaries of tendaanas' *tes* shift

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gradually with the passage of generations in adjustment to changing social boundaries.

It is significant how frequently in settlements like Tongo tɛndaanas' boundaries are adjusted to cognatic ties between a particular tɛndaana's clan and a segment of the immigrant clan. In Tongo all Dekpiɛŋ, barring two or three homesteads, is on Zubiuŋ land; there is not one segment of Dekpiɛŋ that has no cognatic or affinal ties with Zubiuŋ. The few men who live on Gbizug land are all matrilateral kin of Gbizug. All Kuorəg is on Soog land; and the Kuorəg tradition is that one of their ancestors was a Soog *ahəŋ* (sister's son) who was granted land to settle on by his *ahɔb* (maternal uncle), the Soog tɛndaana. Similarly, Lɛbhtiis yidɛm of Puhug call themselves the classificatory sister's sons of Gbizug, and most of them live on Gbizug land. This is a further indication that the ill-defined boundaries of tɛndaanas' *tɛɛ* are shaped by social relationships.

Not all Namoos live on land under the ritual jurisdiction of other clans. The Chief of Biuŋ, though a Namoo, is also the tɛndaana of Biuŋ. The people of Dkoog live on land under their own tɛndaana, a member of their own clan. They have both a chief and a tɛndaana.[1] In these cases the natives maintain that the original settlers of their clan found no one living there. Being Namoos they brought the chiefship with them, or, as at Biuŋ, held the chiefly rights over the bush out of which Biuŋ has been carved. But the Earth cannot go unworshipped where men dwell; so they undertook the tɛndaanaship themselves.

A tɛndaana's *tɛŋ* is the area in which he exercises priestly duties and responsibilities and the rights and privileges that correspond to them. It is primarily on behalf of the people dwelling or farming there that he constantly consults diviners to find out what sacrifices he must offer in order that the Earth may bless the strivings of men. Lost and unclaimed property or objects found anywhere on his *tɛŋ* must be delivered to him, to be used by him or sacrificed to the Earth. If anybody wishes to build a house on a virgin site, even on farm-land belonging to his own lineage, the blessing of the Earth is essential if the house is to prosper. Therefore the tɛndaana of that *tɛŋ* must come and 'clear the house-site (*kuo yir*)' ritually for the family, receiving, in return, only certain prescribed portions of the meat of the animals sacrificed. If a new grave has to be dug, the tɛndaana, or someone deputizing for him, has to mark it out ritually (*kyieb*) and supervise the digging. This is not only because the dead are laid to rest inside the earth, but also because interring the dead is an act of crucial social and personal importance, charged with ritual meanings of great intensity. It is one of the points at which man's life and the mystical powers of the Earth come into contact in a way that is fraught with the deepest affective and social meaning for the individual and wide consequences for the organization of the society. Thereafter,

[1] But, characteristically, the tɛndaanaship is vested in one segment only of the clan, and that segment is prohibited from holding the chiefship. Moreover, their right to the tɛndaanaship and their exclusion from the chiefship are both validated by their lineage status. They form an attached lineage claiming matrilateral descent from a lineage of Wakii that has the tɛndaanaship. The chiefship is confined to the authentic lineages of Dkoog. Thus the polar relation of chiefship and tɛndaanaship asserts itself within the clan.

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one who was human (*vor*) becomes a spirit (*kpiim*). For this service, too, the tendaana receives only prescribed portions of the sacrificial animals. If a man wants to break virgin land for cultivation, he requires the consent of the tendaana in whose *teŋ* the land lies. Unless the tendaana comes to cut the boundaries (*kie*) of the farm, its cultivation will bring nothing but disaster on the farmer. The tendaana's reward is, again, only a portion of the sacrifices and occasional gifts of grain in subsequent years. Lastly, there are the circumstances in which a tendaana must be called upon to make peace between man and the Earth. The weightiest of these is in the case of blood shed in strife, whether the victim dies or not. Atonement sacrifices must be offered by both parties through the tendaana of the *teŋ* where the blood was shed, and, in clans that have the tendaanaship, through their own tendaanas as well. There are also less heinous sacrileges and even venial sins—such as wearing cloth garments near certain *tɔŋgbana*—for which small atonement sacrifices must be offered through the tendaana; and there are some minor accidents which must be ritually cancelled out by a sacrifice to the Earth. If a house burns down, for example, it is thought of as a quasi-mystical disaster, like a failure of one's crops, and the fire must be ritually 'quenched' by the tendaana, after it has been physically put out.

For all these ritual services, which tendaanas regard both as duties that can be neglected only at peril of life and as rights indicating their status and ritual jurisdiction, no payment is given other than portions of the sacrifices. To people with the standard of living of the Tallensi the value of such perquisites is by no means negligible. It is a common saying that all tendaanas are gluttons and that they are never short of meat. Cynics say that the office of tendaana is coveted for the meat it brings in. We must remember, however, that when we speak of a tendaana here it would be more appropriate to speak of a tendaana and his lineage or clan. For a tendaana can and frequently does send one or more of his clansmen to deputize for him and sometimes even delegates some of his duties to cognates not of his clan; and the rewards of his services must be shared with them and with his close agnates.

Certain taboos of the Earth are obligatory on all tendaanas. Thus it is a taboo for cloth garments to be worn in the vicinity of any of the important *tɔŋgbana* like Doo or of the homesteads of all except a few tendaanas. My clothing was a constant embarrassment to tendaanas even after they had resigned themselves to my European shortcomings. As tendaanas can never lay aside their priestly bonds with the Earth, they may never wear cloth. Instead, they wear dressed skins of domestic or wild ungulates. A tendaana dressed in his finest skins on a solemn occasion has an appearance of hieratic dignity that is most impressive.

There are also, as we have learnt (cf. p. 142), local *teŋ* taboos obligatory on everybody who lives on that *teŋ*, and serving to mark it off from other *teŋ*. Among the commonest are the prohibition against using red ochre (*tandaŋanze'e*) for plastering the homestead or grass for roofing it, and the taboos against killing certain reptiles. In the observance of these taboos, as in their compliance with all the obligations and observances connected with the Earth, Tallensi are extremely conscientious. In consequence,

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his ritual powers and duties give a tendaana very great prestige and considerable moral authority over people living on his *tɛŋ* whether or not they belong to his clan. At Tongo, for instance, the Gbizug tendaana is spoken of and treated with a respect little short of reverence, both in the formal interclan politico-ritual relations and in commonplace relations of everyday life. 'He owns the land (*ɔn nso tɛŋ la*)', Tongo people say gravely, 'we are strangers here. We only grow our millet here to feed ourselves. If we offend the tendaana he can drive us away from here.' The last part of this statement is not literally true. A tendaana cannot drive people off their ancestral dwelling and farm-land; to say the least it would be ethically evil. It is not legal but ritual action that the statement implies. I have seen a tendaana's curse throw a person into a state of anxiety that persisted for days, until a reconciliation was effected. But this was anxiety concerning the mystical consequences of the tendaana's curse, without any assumption as to its jural implications. The term 'owner' applied to a chief or tendaana, as we have stated earlier, is simply a means of subsuming in one concept the configuration of rights and duties, privileges and obligations which defines the relations of a community with its politico-ritual heads in reference to its local framework and to the common values symbolized in ritual doctrine and practice. The material earth and the mystical Earth meet in the functions of tendaanas.

Many Tallensi are able to formulate the distinction between the earth in its physical, utilitarian aspect and the Earth in its ritual manifestations. But in general the distinction is inherent in the economic and politico-ritual institutions of the natives rather than expressed in explicit doctrine or language. Whenever or wherever the concept *tɛŋ* comes up it tends to be ambiguous. It suggests both aspects of the earth, though the major emphasis may be on one or the other. It is as if neither aspect of the earth can appear without the other following like its shadow.

This holds particularly with the *tendaanditib* clans. Their ritual bonds with their *tɛŋ* form a halo around their utilitarian relations with the earth. In most of these clans, therefore, it is a taboo of the Earth to sell parcels of land. To sell farm-land (*kuo*) is like selling pieces of the mystical *tɛŋ* to which they are bound by the strongest ties of interest, emotion, and values. Namoo clans which do not have tendaanas do not feel this strong and direct tie with their *tɛŋ* in its mystical aspect. The utilitarian, material aspect of the earth falls apart from its mystical counterpart more easily for them. Hence it is mostly in such communities that farm-land is sold. But even Namoos say that the earth as such, the *tɛŋ*, cannot be sold. In practice the sale of farm-land is a sale of usufructuary rights and is confined to clansmen or kinsmen as we know. It is, always, a transaction between men who are bound to one another by the fundamental common and mutual interests of Tale collective life. Men cannot buy land in a Tale settlement in which they have no kin. In this, as in other aspects of their relationship towards locality, the Namoos put the major emphasis on the coherence of the community as this is focused in the chiefship. And fundamentally the coherence of the community is as indivisible as the continuity of territory. The Chief of Tongo, for example, exercises an ever-present influence on the prosperity and welfare of the members